

# NEWS RELEASE



International Diabetes Center



## Contacts:

Lynne M. High  
UnitedHealthcare  
(952) 992-5708

[Lynne\\_m\\_high@uhc.com](mailto:Lynne_m_high@uhc.com)

Steven McCarthy  
Park Nicollet Health Services  
(952) 993-6726  
(952) 231-5029 (pager)

Sadhna Morato-Lindvall  
Wheaton Franciscan  
Medical Group  
(414) 465-3145

[sadhna.moratalindvall@wfhc.org](mailto:sadhna.moratalindvall@wfhc.org)

## **WHEATON FRANCISCAN MEDICAL GROUP IN WISCONSIN TO PARTNER WITH INTERNATIONAL DIABETES CENTER AND UNITEDHEALTHCARE TO IMPLEMENT A COMPREHENSIVE UPGRADE TO DIABETES CARE AND EDUCATION**

- *UnitedHealthcare sponsors Diabetes Connections from International Diabetes Center at Park Nicollet to help improve local health care outcomes for people with diabetes in Milwaukee*
- *Wheaton Franciscan Medical Group eligible to meet criteria required to achieve national recognition as a diabetes health care provider and educator*
- *Diabetes affects 8 percent of adults in Wisconsin*

**MINNEAPOLIS – Nov. 12, 2007** – UnitedHealthcare, a UnitedHealth Group (NYSE: UNH) company, is partnering with International Diabetes Center at Park Nicollet (IDC) to implement IDC's evidence-based education and treatment program, Diabetes Connections, at Wheaton Franciscan Medical Group throughout Southeastern Wisconsin.

Diabetes Connections is designed to help health care organizations improve outcomes for people with diabetes. The program engages providers, staff and patients in improving diabetes care and education while decreasing diabetes-related complications:

- Staged Diabetes Management™ focuses on customizing and standardizing an organization's therapeutic approach to diabetes management; it emphasizes a team approach to patient care; and it actively involves patients in managing their illness. This evidence-based approach has been used by hundreds of organizations worldwide with documented improvement in patient outcomes.
- The BASICS patient education curriculum includes tools to teach people with diabetes how to set goals and stay motivated. For example, the Diabetes Success Plan enables patients to record their progress in meeting goals so they stay focused on successes rather than setbacks. The Life Balance Pyramid teaches immediate coping skills, daily supportive activities and lifelong foundations that help patients deal with stress and challenges.

Program implementation occurs over a 15- to 18-month period. One hundred twenty physicians and over 100 support staff members at Wheaton Franciscan will have an opportunity to participate.

All Wheaton Franciscan's diabetes patients, including UnitedHealthcare members with diabetes, are eligible to participate in the program.

"We believe the Diabetes Connections program can serve as a catalyst to improve how we care for people with diabetes in Wisconsin and eventually across the country," said Sam Ho, M.D., executive vice president and chief medical officer, UnitedHealthcare. "Diabetes Connections delivers professional education, team building and organizational development to help guide health care teams in helping people with diabetes achieve better health outcomes."

Participation in Diabetes Connections helps prepare the health care team and the facility to meet criteria established by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) and American Diabetes Association (ADA), which joined forces in 1997 to promote quality diabetes care. The NCQA/ADA-sponsored Diabetes Physician Recognition program recognizes individual health care providers or groups of physicians for meeting or exceeding specified benchmarks of diabetes management.

"We are excited to be working with UnitedHealthcare on this important opportunity to improve and advance diabetes care at a time when nearly 21 million Americans are affected by the disease," said Richard Bergenstal, M.D., executive director, International Diabetes Center. "By using a multi-disciplinary approach that engages the entire care team, IDC customizes the Diabetes Connections program for each site based on the facility's infrastructure and existing capabilities. The Diabetes Connections program consists of tools, processes and education to help address the growing educational needs of medical centers nationwide as they work to improve diabetes outcomes."

Diabetes is associated with an increased risk for a number of serious complications, and certain populations experience an even greater threat. According to the Wisconsin Department of Health & Family Services, nearly 330,000 adults statewide, and 19 percent of Wisconsin residents 65 and older, have diabetes.

Richard Kahn, Ph.D., ADA's chief scientific and medical officer, said, "With one out of every 10 health care dollars in the United States being spent on diabetes and its complications, the American Diabetes Association welcomes efforts or collaborations that seek to improve the lives of people affected by diabetes."

"We look forward to participating in this important pilot that focuses on diabetes care," said Loren Meyer, M.D., president and CEO of Wheaton Franciscan Medical Group, part of Glendale, Wis.-based Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare. "This partnership will enhance Wheaton Franciscan's ability to deliver unparalleled patient service and care in diabetes management and education and foster better overall health outcomes."

#### **About Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare**

Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare (WFH) is a Catholic, not-for-profit organization with more than 100 health and shelter organizations in Wisconsin, Iowa, Colorado and Illinois. Started by the Wheaton Franciscan Sisters more than 125 years ago and formally incorporated in 1983, WFH has corporate services offices in Wheaton, Illinois and Glendale, Wis. In Southeast Wisconsin, WFH is co-sponsored by the Wheaton Franciscan and Felician Sisters and has nearly 12,000 associates, making it the second-largest private employer in the area. Hospitals include All Saints in Racine, St. Joseph and St. Francis in Milwaukee, Elmbrook Memorial in Brookfield and The Wisconsin Heart Hospital in Wauwatosa. The region also

includes Wheaton Franciscan Medical Group with 260 physicians in more than 50 locations, a network of outpatient centers, four long-term care facilities, Home Health and Hospice.

**About International Diabetes Center at Park Nicollet**

Park Nicollet Health Services is an integrated care system that includes Park Nicollet Methodist Hospital, Park Nicollet Clinic, Park Nicollet Foundation and Park Nicollet Institute. Park Nicollet Health Services is based in St. Louis Park, Minnesota, and has more than 8,200 employees, including 645 physicians on staff. International Diabetes Center at Park Nicollet provides world-class patient-centered team care, education and clinical research to meet the needs of people with diabetes, their families and the health professionals who care for them. The center is recognized internationally for its range of clinical and educational programs, products and services that focus on translating new findings into clinical practice.

**About UnitedHealthcare**

UnitedHealthcare ([www.unitedhealthcare.com](http://www.unitedhealthcare.com)) provides a full spectrum of consumer-oriented health benefit plans and services. The company organizes access to quality, affordable health care services on behalf of more than 26 million individual consumers, contracting directly with more than 535,000 physicians and care professionals and more than 4,700 hospitals nationwide to offer them broad, convenient access to services nationwide. UnitedHealthcare is one of the businesses of UnitedHealth Group (NYSE: UNH), a diversified Fortune 50 health and well-being company.

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